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ABSTRACT

A narrative, storied, or constructivist approach to the study of returning adult students is compared with an approach that is positivist, "scientific," or paradigmatic. The paradigmatic approach is an application to social science of the rules and assumptions that govern the scientific method in natural science. In the narrative approach, the rules of literature and discourse analysis are applied to the constructed renditions of events and experiences. The research reported in this paper is about the motivations and orientations of adults who considered pursuing baccalaureate degrees after a number of years away from the classroom. The problem was studied initially using a paradigmatic approach. In a later followup study, a narrative approach was used. The woman who was the subject of the latter study was one of 20 returning adult students from the paradigmatic study, 6 of whom were interviewed for the followup study. The model derived from the paradigmatic study did not really fit this woman's specific situation and the life events that caused her to postpone her return to school. The model-free narrative study yielded insight into the way she processed and reflected on her life's decisions. Results show that the choice of approach to research should be guided by the nature of the inquiry. There is room for both in the research community's repertoire. Appendixes A and B present descriptions of the study instruments, and Appendix C describes goal progress tasks. (Contains two tables and eight references.) (SLD)

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# Interviews as Method or Data: Paradigmatic vs. Narrative Approaches to the Study of Returning Adult Students

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# Interviews as Method or Data:

# Paradigmatic vs. Narrative Approaches

# to the Study of Returning Adult Students

This paper is to describe two different approaches to the study of returning adult students. The narrative, storied, or constructivist approach is often contrasted with approaches termed positivist, scientific, hypothetico-deductive, or paradigmatic. There are deep philosophical and substantive differences between the two approaches. They are irreducible and complementary, and each gives us information that we cannot get from the other (Bruner, 1986).

The paradigmatic approach is an application to social science of the rules and assumptions that govern the scientific method in natural science. In scientific thinking, there are abstract general rules or laws. These are context free and testable by further scientific experimentation and activity. Methods and procedures are controlled and standardized, and there is an effort to eliminate ambiguity and inconsistency.

In the narrative approach, rules of literature and discourse analysis are applied to stories: constructed renditions of events and experiences. Stories are concrete, contextual, and testable through ordinary intuition, verification , and comparison with personal experience. Methods and procedures vary from one case to another; standardization is not valued; inconsistencies are expected.

The research reported in this paper was about the motivations and orientations of adults who consider pursuing baccalaureate degrees after a number of years away from the classroom. The problem was studied initially using a paradigmatic approach. In a later follow-up study, a narrative approach was used.

Interviews were conducted in both studies, but the interviews were quite different in both form and substance. In the paradigmatic study, the interview was a methodology, a means of gathering data. The variables that defined the data were specified in advance to reflect aspects of a proposed model, and the interview questions were carefully formulated and crafted to assure that data were obtained from all subjects for all variables. In contrast, in the narrative study, the interviews were a means not only of gathering data, but also of defining data. The stuff being studied was constructed during the interviews. The interviewees told stories, and the stories they told were the subject matter of the study. The interviews were analyzed using methods that revealed the meaning subjects gave to events and experiences in their lives, the ways they portrayed and characterized themselves and others, the roles they held in their own experiences, and the ways they fashioned identities.

Each of these two approaches has strengths; each has limitations. The paradigmatic approach has a long and venerable tradition, many methodological conventions, and well-developed validity criteria. The narrative approach is a new and growing phenomenon, with less consensus and with emerging and developing guidance

for methodology and validity. The paradigmatic study yielded insights about relationships among variables and validity of a model; the narrative study yielded insights into the meaning of an individual's lived experiences. In this paper, the results for one returning adult student are presented, and the two approaches are compared and contrasted.

Interviews as Method: The Paradigmatic Approach The woman who is the subject of this paper was one of twenty returning adult students included in the paradigmatic study. A two-stage interview was conducted with each of the twenty subjects, who had made inquiries at a baccalaureate college and participated in an initial individual counselling session with a member of the college's adult and continuing education staff. The two interviews were conducted six months apart using a structured protocol that included open-ended question, restricted response questions, and paper-and pencil measures. Although subjects were allowed to elaborate on their answers, the general pattern of questions and responses was controlled by the interviewer.

The paradigmatic study incorporated five variables. Three of these were antecedents, and were assessed at the first interview. Two were outcomes and were assessed at the second interview. One variable, self-efficacy, was used as both an antecedent and an outcome measure.

The three antecedent variables were:

- self-efficacy: the learner's personal beliefs about his or her capabilities with respect to the tasks required to accomplish the educational goal (Appendix A)

- barriers/resources: the learner's personal beliefs about the availability of necessary resources such as time, money, and educational programs (Appendix B)

- goal certainty: the learner's self-reported degree of belief that he or she would attain his or her stated educational goal.

The two outcome variables were:

-success in completing tasks that constitute progress toward an educational goal (Appendix C)

-self-efficacy (repeat of antecedent measure)

The five variables included in the study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Variables in the Continuum of Progress Model

| | Variable | Format | Item Content Domain | Response Mode | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Process Variables | Self-Efficacy | Analytical measure: list of 20 items | Tasks required for success as a student | Self-Report 1-10 on each | Used as process and outcome measure |
| | Barriers | Analytical measure: list of 17 items | Potential deterrents to participation | Rate importance as a deterrent 1-3 | Reverse-scaled:low scores favor goal progress |
| | Goal Certainty | Holistic measure: self-report. | Certainty that I will achieve goal | Rate self 1-10 | |
| Outcome Variables | Goal Progress | Analytical measure: list of seven tasks. | Progress toward an educational goal. Participation is one of the seven tasks | Rated 1-3 for each task by interviewer based on data from second interview | |
| | Self-Efficacy | Repeat of measure in Row 1. Posttest, six months after initial measure. | | | |

Relationships among these five variables were predicted based on a process-outcome model for participation in adult education. The model postulated that high self-efficacy and low perceived barriers supported but did not impel goal progress, and high goal certainty was a catalyst that impelled goal progress. Also, the model proposed that goal progress, and particularly participation, enhanced self-efficacy. Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results were assessed in terms of the model.

Results of Paradigmatic Study The results included score and relative position within the sample for each variable and score profile across the five variables. These results are presented below for one subject, and the fit of the model to her profile is assessed.

Sarah was a 42-year-old married woman, a full-time coordinator of religious education, with two school age children. Two interviews were conducted, six months apart.

Interview 1 This interview included an education history. Sarah had started high school in a college prep program and switched to business. She didn't like school and began working right after she graduated. She



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worked as a clerk in a state agency and took a few courses in the evening division at a local college. She married three years after graduating, and moved to a large city. She went to a community college part time for two years and worked at the continuing education office at a large private urban university for three years before she and her husband moved back to their home town.

She was a full time homemaker for seven years, sold real estate for four years, worked as a volunteer religion teacher for eight years and then began a full time job as a director of religious education. She took many in-service catechetics courses as part of a certification program for catechists. A professional mentor suggested that she consider a four-year college.

Sarah wanted a degree for personal fulfillment and status and for learning's sake. She had been thinking about it for a long time. Her children were older now and the time seemed right. She was apprehensive about school because she was also starting a new job.

Interview 2 Sarah had sent in her enrollment form but had been unable to schedule any classes. She planned to major in religious studies. She was apprehensive because her job was quite demanding.

Scores on objective measures:

| PROCESS VARIABLES (FIRST INTERVIEW) | | | OUTCOME VARIABLES (SECOND INTERVIEW) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEPRE | BARRS | GCERT | SE POS POST | GPROG |
| 166 | 32 | 10 | 165 | 8 |

Analysis Process: Sarah's self-efficacy pretest score was almost a standard deviation above the mean. Her barriers score was almost two standard deviations above the mean, the highest in the sample of twenty. Her goal certainty score was the maximum score.

Outcome: Sarah's self-efficacy posttest was stable, only a single raw score point lower than her pretest score and about two thirds of a standard deviation above the mean. Her goal progress score was more than a standard deviation below the mean.

Interpretation Sarah fit the model, but illustrated one of its limitations. Her high self-efficacy score appeared to have been well-entrenched at the first interview, and was unaffected by her experiences during the period between the two interviews. Her barriers score was extremely high, reflecting the constraints of her current life situation. Her goal certainty was high. However, her goal progress was low.

It appears that a six month interval was not sufficient to capture Sarah's completion of the goal progress tasks. Her commitment remained strong, but her educational goals were deferred. The assumption that an initial intake at a four-year college represents a threshold for every student was not supported. The model was not inadequate, but the time interval for these interviews was too rigid.

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Interviews as Data: The Narrative Approach For the narrative part of the study, six of the twenty subjects from the first part were selected for in-depth interviews, conducted five years later. Sarah was one of these six. For these in-depth interviews, the approach was open and nonrestrictive. Questions and probes were used only to get the subjects started. The content, emplotment, and sequence of the interviews were controlled by the interviewee.

Sarah's interview did not center only on Sarah's return to school. School was a part of her story, but only a part; I studied the story as a whole. Rather than concentrating only on behaviors, beliefs, or motives related to returning to school, I studied how going back to school worked for Sarah and how school fit with who she was (or hoped to be).

I framed the analysis of the interview in the notion of social roles. A social role is "an organized set of behaviors that belongs to an identifiable position in a...community." (Hogan & Cheek, 1983, p. 339). For each social role a prototype exists, carrying a set of socioculturally based expectations associated with appropriate enactment of the role. Departures from these expectations are considered atypical and elicit dissonance.

Every individual holds more than one social role and we can describe a person in terms of her social roles. Social identity is an aggregate of a person's separate manifestations of self within each social role (Sarbin, 1989). Social roles describe people, but do not define them. Sociocultural expectations for social roles are not adequate to guide an individual's behaviors, either within a role or across roles. Individual guidance comes from within. In contrast to sociocultural expectations for enactment of a role, which come from the community, individuals also hold personal expectations for enactment of each of their roles. These personal expectations may be consistent or at odds with sociocultural expectations. An individual enacts and combines her social roles in her own unique way, with a consistency of bearing that is stable across roles and transcends changes in social roles (Juhasz, 1983). This stability of personhood, reflected in an individual's personal expectations for her various roles, defines the individual's personal identity.

Personal identity incorporates the person's sense of who she is, the qualities and attributes she claims, and the values she holds. It shapes her personal expectations for each of her social roles, includes fidelity to a moral standard (Sarbin, 1989, p. 194) and obligates accountability to a set of values based on a personal sense of the Good. A person synthesizes her personal expectations for each of her social roles according to an internalized set of values to yield an overall, encompassing set of personal expectations for herself as a human being.

Social roles are not always perfectly integrated, and they do not always mesh perfectly: they overlap, conflict, and evolve. Tensions may exist within a particular role or between or among roles. The resolution of these tensions provides a forum for people to act in conformance with their personal identities, and an observer could gain some understanding of an individual's personal identity simply by observing the individual resolving a role conflict. However, when a person is asked to talk about her life, she describes episodes in which she appears in various social roles. In relating these episodes, she tells stories. Rather than merely cataloguing

occurrences, she selects, orders, emphasizes, and interprets events and experiences. In so doing she imposes order and makes meaning. She endows her experiences with plot elements--plot macrostructure, meaningful sequences, plot tension, conflict, and resolution. The elements that emerge in the telling are manifestations of personal identity. People especially reveal their personal identities when they relate stories of role tensions, for the events they are relating cannot be endowed with meaning simply on the basis of the sociocultural expectations of a particular social role. The storyteller must make the events meaningful.

Because narratives are emplotted, coherent stories in which events are related in organized ways, narratives have plot macrostructures. In one model for plot macrostructure (Gergen & Gergen, 1986), plots unfold as follows:

-a goal state or valued endpoint is established

-episodes or events are related. These events are selected and arranged in such a way as to render the goal state more likely (progressive), less likely (regressive) or neither more nor less likely (stable). (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, p. 26)

In a narrative, the content elements of people enacting social roles can be organized using this plot macrostructure. Because each social role carries sociocultural and personal expectations, fulfillment of these expectations for a given social role can be posited as a goal state. In relating and explaining events involving a given role, a narrator constructs meaning according to a plot development structure. Under this structure, a choice or event that coincides with the sociocultural or personal expectations of a particular social role is progressive; a choice or event at odds with these expectations is regressive; a choice or event that is neutral with respect to the expectations is stable.

In the narrative part of this study, I analyzed Sarah's stories. As a returning adult student, Sarah accepted a social role. The social role of student was one of many social roles Sarah held simultaneously. It is a role that almost universally generates role tensions. I studied these role tensions as Sarah related them in narratives. In stories of role tensions, the same event was part of two or more concurrent plot structures:

-a macrostructure reflecting personal identity (manifested in personal expectations for specific roles) and

-one or more substructures specific to particular social roles.

In these plot structures, two or more simultaneous goal states existed: the goal of fulfillment of personal identity (macrostructure) and the goal of fulfillment of sociocultural expectations associated with particular social roles. Within each plot structure, any given event had directionality in terms of both goal states. The directionality might be the same or it might be different. If it was different, the episode represented a role tension. The resolution of such role tensions was a manifestation of personal identity.

I first studied Sarah's narrative holistically to identify her social roles and describe her personal identity. Then I selected narrative episodes portraying role tensions--inconsistencies in role expectations within or across roles. I analyzed these segments to show how they revealed Sarah's personal identity. Finally, I considered the way school fit with Sarah's personal identity, both in terms of her personal expectations for her role as a



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returning student, and in terms of the significance of returning to school (or the outcomes of returning to school) for her personal identity.

Results of Narrative Study When I re-visited Sarah five years after her first two-part interview, she had changed to a different job in the same field. She had nearly completed an associate's degree in religious studies at a junior college, and had developed a deep interest in English literature. She was committed to continuing for her baccalaureate degree, and was considering a number of different possible schools and programs.

### *Social Roles*

In her narrative, Sarah, portrayed herself in eight different social roles:

Family Roles

Wife She had been married for 26 years. Her marriage was rewarding and satisfying.

Mother She and her husband had one child in college and one in high school. Her family had always been and still was her first priority.

Job/Career Roles

Previous She worked at a variety of jobs. She chose jobs primarily for compatibility with her family responsibilities.

Current She was working as a professional religious educator. She considered this her career field for the present.

Future She was satisfied with her present career, but open to the possibility of changing careers.

Student Roles

Present She was about to complete a two-year degree. She searched for a program and schedule that fit with the demands of her life.

Future She planned to pursue a four-year degree. She was considering changing academic fields based on her interests. She did not need to complete a degree for her present career.

Avocational Roles

Volunteer She was active in arts and church activities.

### *Personal Identity*

Sarah was a life-crafter, a serene steward who balanced the demands of her roles in ways that reflected her religious faith and humanitarian values. Her priorities were very clear. Her primary commitment was to her husband and children, and all other roles were subordinate to the roles of wife and mother. However, these were not her only roles; she recognized that she was capable of additional commitments, and sought them out with meticulous care and reflection.

Sarah was unusually self-aware. She had a clear understanding of what was important to her, and lived her life in ways that reflected her values. Her decision processes were calm and orderly: she was not torn by

role tensions. She did not invest resources in anxiety, tension, or equivocation. She weighed alternatives in a calm and orderly way, made a decision, and then lived with her decision. If none of the available alternatives were acceptable, she deferred closure gracefully, and did not waste time or energy on fruitless quests or dead ends. She accepted with good humor the things she could not change.

Sarah found great satisfaction and reward in her roles as a wife and a mother. She considered these roles important, worthwhile, and honorable. She spoke of her husband and children with quiet pride. She clearly believed that full-time homemaking held equal stature to employment outside the home.

Sarah's capacity to accept roles other than wife and mother changed as the needs of her family changed. She worked at a variety of jobs, each one chosen for compatibility with her responsibilities at home. She also volunteered as a religious educator. She sustained this volunteer work for many years and it eventually led to a salaried position.

Sarah's only anxiety or role tension was retrospective. She described a struggle with the outcome of her decision to work right after high school instead of going to college then. She called this her "one regret," and spoke of fighting "the fight that says you didn't have to have the degree to prove yourself." She won that fight, but evaluated her victory as "far too hard."

Sarah approached her return to school characteristically, with composure and serenity. She began courses at a four-year college, but the schedule was not compatible with her job and family responsibilities. She stopped after three courses. After a short while she learned about a junior college that had a weekend program, which was a much better fit with her schedule. She began study at this college, and completed her associate's degree in three years.

In Sarah's interview, she frequently used the phrase "It worked out well" to describe the outcome of a decision or transition process. This phrase illustrates Sarah's craftsman-like approach to life. Her personal identity was manifested not only in the roles she assumed, but also in the orderly and thoughtful ways she managed and balanced her roles, moved among roles, and made choices within a role.

*Personal Identity in Narrative*

In this episode, Sarah described the process by which she entered her collegiate program. She began taking courses at a four-year college, but found the scheduling difficult. She took time off when she changed jobs, because she was adjusting to a new job. She learned of a junior college with more convenient scheduling and location, and she began her program. The episode includes three decisions: begin study at the four-year college; take time off from study; begin study at the junior college.

407 so I did wait, and then I went to St. Angela and took three courses.

...

409 But I found it really difficult to do that at night, after working all day,

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because St. Anselm was a full time job,
and being home when I felt I needed to be home

...

and so I tried to pick and choose my times that I could go to school,
but it was a real struggle.
I found it very hard to do.
So I did that two--three semesters,
and then made the decision to leave St. Anselm and then started another job,
and I'm a creature of habit,
so I needed to have that time for the year to become adjusted to being here
and to really see if it was going to work for a year or more.
And with Marillac just up the street and a couple of parishioners who on occasion would come into the office

...

--it was becoming very clear to me that Marillac was do-able,
and so I did the whole thing,
I took all the entrance tests, I applied, I did the interviews,
and began...three years ago September..

...

and took six or three credits each semester.

...

KM and that...you could dovetail that with what you had to do here...?
SS Yes. Yeah, well...(laugh)
KM It sounds like a jigsaw puzzle...
SS It is. It's very much a jigsaw puzzle.
Um, it worked.
The weekends are every other weekend, both Saturday and Sunday.
And it depends on the time that you take those classes,
and for me I found if I got out by 7:30 in the morning and was back by 1
that I didn't feel that it was that much of an imposition on my weekend,
and I still had time for other things.
And that worked very, very well.
It couldn't have been better for me.

*Plot Structure Directionality*

| Decision | Social Role | Directionality for Role Expectations | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Sociocultural | Personal |
| Take courses at St Angela | Student | Progressive | Regressive |
| Take time off from study | Student | Regressive | Stable |
| Take courses at Marillac | Student | Progressive | Progressive |

The first decision was progressive in terms of the sociocultural expectations of the role of student, but regressive in terms of Sarah's personal expectations for this role. For Sarah, school was acceptable only if it allowed her to meet her responsibilities to her family. Any school demands that interfered with her role as wife and mother were unacceptable.

The second decision was regressive in terms of the sociocultural expectations of the role of student, but stable in terms of Sarah's personal expectations for this role. It was not regressive, because her decision was to discontinue a particular program, not to abandon her plans for school. She was fully prepared to wait until she found a more appropriate program, or until her other demands changed and made her original program more feasible.

The third decision was progressive in terms of both sets of expectations. Her new program allowed her to take courses at times that fit well with her other responsibilities.

This sequence of decisions is highly revealing of Sarah's personal identity. She moved thoughtfully and deliberately from taking courses under difficult circumstances, to not taking courses, to taking courses under more favorable circumstances. Each decision was rational and planned.

*School and Personal Identity*

For Sarah, school was not a means to advance in her current career field. She had gained entry into a professional field without a degree, and she was not looking to change to another career area. Nor was she seeking to measure up to a social standard; she had resolved earlier feelings of inadequacy about not having a college degree. She wanted a degree for personal fulfillment and for the sake of the learning.

Her primary commitment was to her family, and she placed the demands of her roles as wife and mother above all others. Her personal identity called for equilibrium and serenity. Therefore, she approached the demands of schooling in a careful, deliberate, and patient way. She did not stay in a program that overextended her or put herself on a stringent timetable to complete her degree. She was quietly confident that she would

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complete the degree, but she was willing to work slowly and surely, and to tolerate interruptions in her progress.

Comparison of Results from Two Studies

In the paradigmatic study, the goal was to assess the validity of a model with respect to a particular case. The interview was a method for gathering data to study in terms of the model. The model was a boilerplate, with blanks that corresponded to variables.

The model did not really accommodate Sarah's data. Although the data did not contradict the model, the model did not capture Sarah's progress because it assumed that the initial interview was a threshold. For Sarah this initial interview was followed by a period of activity with other things and deferral of school. This deferral was reflected in a low goal progress score. Sarah's data did not fit in the prespecified blanks in the model's boilerplate. However, the model was useful overall. Its failure to capture Sarah's progress suggests that a more flexible timetable might make the model more sensitive. This modification would not be difficult.

The narrative study, in which the interview itself was data, was less rigid. The study was model free; thus, fit to a model was not an issue. Sarah's story was the unit of analysis. In the story she described her deliberate, methodical approach to returning to school. This approach was faithful to and consistent with her personal identity as revealed in her narrative as a whole. The narrative was rich and evocative, and yielded valuable insights into the ways in which Sarah processed and reflected on decisions in her life.

Each approach has value. The paradigmatic approach is better suited for gathering limited insights about more people, frequently a goal of programmatic research. Models are useful to organized and explain behavior. Care must be taken to consider the validity of the model in individual cases as well as its utility for group applications. Also, it is important not to let a model take on a life of its own: models can be revisited and modified.

The narrative approach is appropriate for gathering deeper insights about fewer people. These insights can be useful in motivation or counselling applications. Because stories evoke emotion, they are highly efficacious as teaching tools. Stories convey deep, complex meaning.

Each approach has its advantages and limitations. The choice of approach should be governed by the nature of the inquiry. Both approaches are honorable: there is room for both in the research community's collective repertoire of ways to study behavior (Polkinghorne, 1991).

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## APPENDIX A

### The Self-Assessment with Respect to Adult Learning

The Self-Assessment with Respect to Adult Learning was developed to measure subjects' self-efficacy perceptions. The instrument consisted of twenty items, each a description of a task or a skill related to success as a student in a classroom. It was designed to be administered as a paper-and-pencil test.

Experienced educators and advisors of college students were asked to suggest skills and tasks that they thought were relevant to collegiate-level success. Their suggestions were used to generate a draft. The draft was reviewed by a panel of four experts in adult education: advisors or other professional staff at a college whose student body is composed almost entirely of adults. Based on the comments of the reviewers, the wording of three items was refined slightly to make the items clearer. No items were added or omitted.

The draft was pilot-tested on a group of adults, both students and non-students. Minor clarifications in wording were made following the pilot test.

Verbal instructions were as follows:

"This paper lists twenty skills and tasks that relate to success as a college student. Please assess yourself on a scale of one to ten, with one low and ten high, as to how successful you are at each item."

Scores were calculated by summing individual item scores. The possible range was 20-200.

### Self-Assessment with Respect to Adult Learning

1 Study on your own
2 Obtain help from a teacher if you need it
3 Stick to a study schedule
4 Pass tests
5 Use your time efficiently
6 Get information from a library
7 Organize and write a term paper
8 Retain a substantial amount of information
9 Meet deadlines
10 Plan ahead
11 Organize a project yourself
12 Set goals
13 Learn effectively from a textbook
14 Study when you would really rather be doing something else
15 Evaluate your own work
16 Express yourself clearly in writing
17 Understand something you initially find difficult
18 Follow through on a project
19 Achieve a goal
20 Express yourself clearly orally

## APPENDIX B

### Problems with Taking Courses

The Problems with Taking Courses questionnaire was used to measure perceptions of barriers to participation in college-level courses. The instrument consisted of 17 items, each a description of a potential barrier for a returning adult student. Items were written to reflect three different types of barriers: situational, institutional, and dispositional, as defined by Cross (1981).

The distribution of items was as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Situational barriers | 10 items |
| Institutional barriers | 4 items |
| Dispositional barriers | 3 items |

The instrument was pilot-tested on three volunteers, all returning adult students. An 18th item, "Other (explain)," was added to allow for any individual barriers not listed.

The instrument was administered as a paper-and-pencil test. Verbal instructions were given as follows:

"This paper lists 17 problems that someone who is considering college study might have to deal with. Please consider each item in terms of your own experience. Circle the response for each item that most closely corresponds to how seriously each problem would affect your ability to take a course."

Scores were calculated by summing individual item scores. The possible range was 17-51, with higher scores indicating greater perceived barriers.

Problems with Taking Courses

1 This is *not usually a problem* for me, and would not hinder me from taking a course.

2 This is *sometimes a problem* for me. It is difficult for me to take a course because of this problem, but I could probably find a way.

3 This is a *serious problem* for me. Because of this problem, it is almost impossible for me to take a course, even if I really want to.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lack of money | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | Lack of time | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | Home responsibilities | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | Job responsibilities | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5 | Lack of child care | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | Lack of transportation | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | No place to study or practice | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | Family wouldn't like the idea | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9 | Health or medical problems (mine) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10 | Health or medical problems (family member) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11 | Takes too long to complete program | 1 | 2 | 3 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Courses are not scheduled when I can attend | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13 | Courses I want are not available | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14 | Too much red tape in enrolling | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15 | Unable to meet admission requirements | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16 | Afraid I couldn't do the work | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17 | Dislike studying | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18 | Other (explain)_____ | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## APPENDIX C

### Goal Progress Tasks

1 Completing at least one college course.: *successful completion of one or more undergraduate courses at any point in the subject's life.*

2 Finding ways to meet educational costs: *developing a reasonable strategy to meet course costs.*

3 Finding enough time: *developing a sustainable way to allocate adequate time to attend classes and study.* This could mean a reduction in other commitments, foregoing personal leisure activities, a modification in schedule, or another accommodation.

4 Finding a way to meet other responsibilities: *developing a sustainable way to meet all essential responsibilities.* This means "working things out": modifying expectations, finding child care, receiving approval for a reduction in job responsibilities, or whatever other accommodations the individual situation requires.

5 Selecting a collegiate program: *making a decision and commitment to pursue a particular program of study.*

6 Selecting a school.: as *making a decision and commitment to enroll in a particular school or schools to earn the desired degree.*

7 Enrolling: *registering for and attending courses in a chosen program.*

Each of these seven tasks is part of an overall set of behaviors that constitute progress toward completion of an educational goal. Two of the tasks (completing at least one course and enrolling in a program) are included in typical dichotomous definitions of participation

If progress is conceptualized as a continuum the completion of each task is seen as movement along the continuum. Individuals who completed some of these antecedent tasks but did not actually enroll were considered to have progressed along their own continuum. In a continuous rather than dichotomous definition of goal progress, pre-participation outcomes of the support and stimulus conditions are recognized

Goal Progress Tasks and Participation

| Pre-Participation Tasks | Participation Tasks |
|---|---|
| Find Money | Complete first course |
| Find Time | Enroll in program |
| Find Way to Cover Responsibilities | |
| Select Program | |
| Select School | |

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